and £30 per annum. It is profitable to carry fresh fish inland by bicycle even as far as Blantyre,[1] as the shore price to the retailer is 4*s.* a load, which later may fetch from 16*s.* to 24*s.*[2] Yao on the south-west lake shore grow an excellent quality rice.[3] Rice is also grown near Lake Chilwa, but is mainly sold in the market organized near the lake shore by the Agricultural Department.

Division of Labour

The man builds the house, hunts, fishes, makes the nets, baskets, grain-store, game-traps, and, in the old days, the bark-cloth. He cultivates the tobacco. He cuts down the trees and may help with the hoeing and harvesting. The woman hoes, muds the floor of the hut, sweeps, cooks, brings firewood, draws water, brews beer, makes the pots and pipes.[4]

Land Usage

There are two types of garden in the Yao areas south of Lake Nyasa: one the ordinary garden in which the staples grow, and second, gardens along the stream beds. These latter are especially valuable for providing out-of-season crops. In addition most householders have a few small plots for tobacco and ground-nuts.

The main garden is cultivated by the slash-and-burn method, common in Central Africa. The Yao, unlike the Bemba, garden occupies the whole area cleared. Burning is done just before the rainy season (October–November). The ash and soil are hoed into elongated mounds and grain is planted along the ridges. Gardens may be cultivated for more than five years. In the second and subsequent years of cultivation the stalks and weeds are piled up and burnt. There are signs of soil impoverishment. The gardens are cleared in August, and heaped to dry for burning. After the burning the seeds are planted in late November. By February and March green maize is available to supplement the diet, and by the end of April the crops are ready to be harvested. The maize is stored in wicker containers, while sorghum is stored in the huts on a stand. Cassava is planted in large mounds made by turning the turfs over, so that the roots are outside the mound and the vegetable matter inside. Legumes are planted in smaller gardens, or interplanted with the main crop. Ground-nuts are stored, after being shelled, in mud-plastered wicker containers, designed to be rat-proof. Tobacco is planted at the sides of the streams for hand-watering in the seedling stage, and then transplanted about January. The leaves are ready to be plucked about April and soon afterwards they are marketed. Sweet potatoes are planted in the rainy season, and are ready for eating in May. The stream gardens yield out-of-season crops—maize, beans, pumpkins, and also sugar-cane, which is used in the initiation ceremonies.

Craftsmanship

The Yao have few skills. All cultivation is by hoe; axes and knives are their only other technological equipment. The men make mats from reeds and palm leaf, and the women make pottery. The huts are strongly built from poles laced with bamboo and plastered with mud. The roof is thatched with grass. Under Arab influence the

[1] *Census of Native Population*, 1931, p. 26.
[2] Codrington, 1898, p. 317.
[3] Stannus, n. 1922, p. 256; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 137.
[4] Aplin, 1931, p. 19.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

Yao make square houses.[1] Panelled doors and glass windows, deck-chairs and palm furniture are becoming more and more popular. The men wear long Moslem robes and the women are clothed in cotton. In the rural areas there are usually a few craftsmen who still ply their trades as carpenters and blacksmiths, though the latter no longer smelt, but use scrap-iron.

Labour Migration

Statistics are not available for the Yao of Portuguese East Africa or Tanganyika Territory. Yao constitute 34 per cent. of the total population of South Nyasa district, 15 per cent. of upper Shire, 11 per cent. of Blantyre and Zomba.[2] The proportion of labour migrants in these districts was in 1937 as follows:[3]

District	*Adult males fit to work*	*Percentage of emigrants*	*Number producing economic crops*	*Number of subsistence producers*	*Emigrants not heard of since 1930*
South Nyasa .	24,230	27·1	2,912 (12%)	12,025 (49%)	873
Upper Shire .	14,873	15·9	2,555 (10%)	16,629 (67%)	253
Blantyre . .	25,330	15·6	3,788 (15%)	10,165 (40%)	986
Zomba . .	26,879	12·4	7,720 (29%)	9,040 (33%)	553

South Nyasa district, which is unfertile waterless bush with a long history of famine and food shortage, has the highest proportion of labour migrants. Upper Shire, though not fertile, is more prosperous, benefiting from the tobacco- and cotton-growing industries, and from the dried-fish trade.[4]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE[5]

Kinship and Local Grouping

Among the Yao succession is matrilineal and marriage mainly matrilocal. According to some informants succession formerly passed down the line of brothers, as with the Bemba, but it now passes direct to the eldest sister's eldest son, or to descendants of other sisters in order of seniority.[6] Chiefly succession follows the same rule, but the most senior may be set aside for a more suitable candidate.[7]

Clan names, *fukoryo*, are inherited matrilineally, and formerly designated exogamous units,[8] but the marriage prohibition has now ceased to operate. Holders of the same clan name are unable to trace descent from a common ancestress, and for commoners clan names seem to have quite lost their significance; they are, however, carefully remembered in the chiefly lines and in other lines of hereditary rank, such as village headmen.

Within the general kinship grouping of the clan, a smaller group is recognized,

[1] Warner, 1906, p. 144; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 20–2, describes a round hut.

[2] 1931 Census information is taken because the district boundaries were changed between 1931 and 1945, so that the information in the 1945 Census would not be susceptible of comparison with that given in the 1937 Survey of Male Adult Population in the *Bell Report*, Appendix A.

[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A. [4] Smith, 1937.

[5] Information, unless otherwise stated, is from Mitchell, and relates to south Nyasaland Yao.

[6] Johnston, 1897, p. 471; Meredith Sanderson, 1920, p. 370. Cf. Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 187, who says that brothers inherit before sister's son.

[7] Ibid., p. 189. [8] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 236.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

expressed also in the speeches by the marriage sureties. The couple are exhorted to refer disputes to the sureties, and to consult the diviner in case of sickness.[1] After the rite these two sureties have special responsibilities towards the couple; grievances are referred to them, and they must be present when adultery cases are heard in court. If the marriage witness ceremony has not been performed, the relationship is not regarded as legal and no adultery compensation can be claimed by the husband.

Divorce used to be a private affair, which was merely signalized by one party giving to the other an arrow as a token of separation.[2] Nowadays all divorce cases go to court. The woman is usually asked to choose between her husband and the adulterer, and the compensation paid to the former, if she decides to leave him, is higher—amounting to about 10s. A man can be sent away from the village by his wife's kin, but if he has given no grounds for divorce he can claim compensation and will also take back any gifts made to his wife. A few small gifts to his mother-in-law are not reclaimed. Divorces are easily obtained and frequent. Grounds for the divorce of a man may include failure to pay hut tax, one of the specific duties of the husband.

The custom of making a marriage payment is recorded by Johnson[3] (on the east coast of Lake Nyasa) as a relatively new adoption. When given it is divided between the bride's father, mother, and mother's brother and brother.[4]

Slavery

Domestic slavery was an important institution in the Yao social system. Slaves were obtained by capture, purchase, or in compensation for injury.[5] A man would pay a debt by giving slaves (wives or members of his matrilineal kin group) to his creditors.[6] A man might voluntarily enslave himself to a man having charge of many women, as a means of obtaining a wife.[7] The children of a free man and a slave woman were not emancipated, as their father could not take them from the village of their mother's master, who had the right to sell them.[8] Slaves took part in the ordinary life of the village; women slaves ranked as junior wives of their masters and shared the usual work of women. Men might be supplied with guns for hunting or might accompany their masters to war, trade for them, spin, weave, sew, make baskets.[9] The institution of domestic slavery was an expression of a dominant motif in Yao culture—the association of status with a large number of dependents. Its abolition by the British was in itself a major blow to the prestige and authority of the chiefs.

Information about the social organization of the Yao in Portuguese East Africa is scanty, but it is in agreement with what is known of the Nyasaland Yao; Heckel, who knew the Yao in Lindi district, Tanganyika Territory, confirms the correctness of Stannus's account of the South Nyasa Yao.

The Yao came into Nyasaland in small parties of kinsmen. Their experience and their superior weapons soon enabled them to dominate the Nyanja among whom they settled, and today they dominate the population of the Southern Province. They are organized into loose groups of villages, under petty, independent chiefs. They seem

[1] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 245; Hynde, 1895; Johnson, 5, 1922, pp. 69–73; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i; Werner, 1906, pp. 129–32.
[2] 1922, pp. 72–3.
[3] Werner, 1906, pp. 152–3; Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 237.
[4] Stigand, 1909, p. 122 (not a reliable source).
[5] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 280.
[6] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 166–7.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 280.
[9] Werner, 1906, p. 273.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

return to the *lupanda*, where the initiates are welcomed by their friends. An essential part of the ceremony which takes place at this stage is the exhibition of animal shapes made by the *m'micira*, with mounds of earth outlined in flour. These animal shapes differ from lodge to lodge. On the last night before the return to the village the initiates undergo a ceremonial bathing, each boy being carried to the stream by a woman, who thereafter is addressed as 'elder sister'. Finally, with new names, and freshly oiled and decorated, they march to the chief's village to be redeemed by him from the *m'micira* with gifts of cloth. After initiation it is a deadly insult to call a boy by his child-name. All who pass through initiation together consider themselves bound by mutual obligations of hospitality.[1]

Girls' initiation takes place in three stages. First, there is *ciputu*, the general initiation before puberty, which corresponds to the boys' *lupanda*. It takes place at the same time of year, and though it lasts for less than a week, its conclusion is celebrated at *lupanda* jointly with the conclusion of the boys' initiation. A hut is built in the bush, like the long dormitory of the boys, and four days are spent in dancing and singing. Each girl (aged about eight years) is accompanied by a sponsor, a woman friend who continues to be her mentor during subsequent rites, and who assists in giving the girl instruction in her womanly duties. At the end the girls are bathed and anointed, dressed in new clothes, and each is carried to *lupanda* by her sponsor. Here they prove their skill in dancing and receive gifts from their friends. Ritual defloration follows the *ciputu* initiation.[2] Among Mohammedans, clitoridectomy used to be performed by a woman operator, but, it is said, was discontinued in about 1903 on account of the heavy mortality.[3]

After this first general celebration, first pregnancy and first birth are the occasions of separate rites for each girl. According to some informants there were once two ceremonies connected with pregnancy. One, for the young married men whose wives had not yet conceived, used to take place at the same time as *ciputu*; each man was attended by a woman sponsor not his wife, given good advice, and put through various tests of manhood. Mitchell does not confirm the present existence of this ceremony, but in the old days if a man was betrothed or married to a child going through her *ciputu* he had to accompany her.

The *litiwo* ceremony takes place when a young married woman quickens with child for the first time.[4] The woman, with her sponsor and the married women of the neighbourhood, went out in procession for a ceremony of singing and dancing and instruction to the young couple, followed by a feast. Nowadays no men are allowed to attend *litiwo*. A child born of a woman who had not undergone this rite used to be buried alive; nowadays her *aryene mbumba* is charged by the chief.

Finally, six days after the first child is born, its naming ceremony forms a last initiation rite for its mother. The husband is formally led into her hut by her sponsor and the married women of the neighbourhood, and the child is taken out for the first time to the accompaniment of feasting and dancing.

Most Yao men and women act as sponsors of initiates at least once, and all parti-

[1] Sources for boys' initiation: Stannus and Davey, 1913; Werner, 1906, pp. 124–6; Stannus, 4, 1922, pp. 247–63; Heckel, 1935, pp. 19 sq.; Johnston, 1897, p. 409; Weule, 1, 1909, p. 304.
[2] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 234. [3] Ibid., 1, 1910, p. 296.
[4] Ibid., 4, 1922, p. 274; Heckel, 1935, p. 23, calls it *cinumbu* (belly).

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

cipate yearly in the great initiation festival for boys and girls. Consequently as they repeat each year the lessons of their own initiation, the ceremonies are the main vehicle of Yao culture.[1]

There are also two Moslem ceremonies:

(1) *Jandu*, the boys' Moslem baptism, which takes about seven days, and is usually worked in with *lupanda*:

(2) *Nsondo*, the girls' Moslem baptism, which is the same as *jandu*, but usually quite separate from *ciputu*. It is important that the wife of a Moslem should have her *nsondo* so that she knows how to prepare the food properly at Ramadan.

Menstrual and Other Taboos

Menstruation is held to be dangerous. A special mat is used by the woman during this time, and is rolled up and kept during the rest of the cycle. The hut is completely replastered after menstruation. Intercourse during menses leads to disease of the man. Sexual contact is dangerous to persons at certain other periods: during initiation ceremonies, during mourning, and for babies who have not been through the protective rite. The danger is thought to lie in *ndaka*, a dread disease characterized by swelling. This may be transmitted by salt in the food. Deaths are often attributed to 'salt'. Much of the significance of the mourning is that medicines are prepared which protect the mourners against the dangers attendant on sexual activity.

Burial Rites

News of a death must be sent to the chief by a messenger carrying a single fowl. The chief gives a present of calico for wrapping the body, and a goat for the burial men. These are called *awilo*, neighbours unrelated to the dead, who volunteer for certain duties. They prepare the body for burial and carry it in procession to the graveyard outside the village. No uninitiated person is allowed to see the funeral. All who attend the burial are prohibited from sexual intercourse for one month. After this time the prohibition is lifted by a ceremony of beer drinking and feasting, and on the following day all fires in the village are extinguished, and then relit; and the mourners are shaved. A year later beer is brewed for a final ceremony.

For a period after her husband's death a widow is unclean, and has to be purified by ritual intercourse with a man who is paid. The widow is not allowed to remarry for two or three years. A widower leaves his wife's village, after receiving a parting gift. The widows of ordinary persons are not inherited. If a man has himself a 'name' (rank and social position), he has an heir, who inherits also the wives of his predecessor. But if the heir (the maternal nephew) has married a cross-cousin (mother's brother's daughter) he would not consider the wife's mother as his inherited wife.

Before the burial the dead man's hut used to be destroyed, together with his possessions. Immediately afterwards a consultation is held as to whether retaliatory action against sorcerers is called for. The *awilo*'s duties include not only the conducting of the burial, but also the subsequent inquiry and the conduct of the second ceremony, the beer drinking, at which they shave the mourners. A man who has

[1] Main sources for girls' initiation: Heckel, 1935, p. 19; Stannus, 1, 1910, pp. 184–7; 4, 1922, pp. 269–74; Stannus and Davey, 1913; Duff, 1903, pp. 312–15; Abdullah, 1919, pp. 16–17; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 125–30; Werner, 1906, pp. 126–7; Johnston, 1897, p. 410.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

436 calico currency was an impossibility.'[1] The Africans could hardly have resisted the change over to a money economy. The taxation system introduced in 1893 was based on the Governor of
436 Zululand's Proclamation III of 1887, and ruled that a tax defaulter
651 was liable to be conscripted for labour until he had earned the
687 amount of his tax. Coffee estates owned by Whites in the Highlands were at the same time in need of labour.[2] Tax was then taken in kind but it was soon changed to cash as a further inducement to Africans to come on to the labour market. The Africans were forced into the cash economy of the Protectorate even if they were unwilling. The measures were so successful that in 1899 the *Gazette* announced that the labour market in Blantyre was flooded.[3]

Modern Economic Structure

● 177 In modern Nyasaland, the wants of the Africans have become even more varied than they were in the earlier days. Most younger
511 men wear European-type clothing and shoes. Many own bicycles and sewing machines. Many houses have glass windows and panelled doors and most of them are furnished with some rough furniture which has been bought from local craftsmen. Many have beds and mosquito nets. Few women cannot boast of enamel dishes to replace their clay pottery or china cups to replace drinking gourds. The food habits of the peoples too have broadened. Most households use sugar these days, and many people drink tea. I should say that all households occasionally buy soap. Certainly all need salt, which formerly was burnt from the saline grass around Lake Shirwa or dissolved out of special soils in Portuguese East Africa. The stock-lists of an Indian-owned village shop in Chiwalo's area and of an African-owned canteen in the same area, which I have set out in Appendix A, indicate the range of the wants of the modern African.
434 It is clear that these wants are over and above food require-
463 ments. The people in these tribal areas live primarily on the

[1] *Report of the Consul and Acting Commissioner Sharpe on the Trade and General Condition of the British Central African Protectorate for April 1896 to March 1897.* C. 8438.

[2] See the *B.C.A. Gazette*, iii, 5 (March 1895), and iii, 17 (Sept. 15th, 1896), which print advertisements offering 'native labour arranged for and supplied to plantations at a commission of 7*s.* 6*d.* a head'.

[3] *B.C.A. Gazette*, vi, 6 (June 24th, 1899).

3:Stanner D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

one of Malemya's men died, after giving birth to quintuplets, some thirty years ago. Deformed children are buried alive. A large number of children is always hoped for and where polygamy is practised, some families are of considerable size, although the mortality among young children is very high. It is, of course, very difficult to state the child-bearing period among natives. It does not start so early as is commonly supposed, and I think the menopause is found within about the same limits as among Europeans.

Death. Natives of Nyasaland live to a good old age. That such is not the case I have found to be one of the many fallacious beliefs concerning natives which should be relegated to the realm of exploded theories, as I have pointed out elsewhere.[1]

Death in old age is recognised as a natural event but apart from this, all sickness and death were formerly and are still to a large extent looked upon as the result of the machinations of some person, an idea which forms the outstanding feature in their belief in witchcraft, *uzawi*.[2]

Here I shall mention the ordinary customs in the case of death. During the last hours of a mortal illness, a man is tended by his wife or wives; the head wife sits constantly supporting his head on her lap or against her breast. A woman is similarly tended by her mother, sisters, and friends. As unconsciousness sets in and the extremities become cold, they say, "His spirit has gone and only the heart remains alive."

The native does not like the idea of lingering on and a man on his death-bed will say to his sons, "Now watch me that I die quickly." He may take medicine to help him over that time or he may give his sons instructions as to what to do. Should a man linger unconscious for a long time, friends will ask his sons, "Did he give you any instructions?" If he has done so, the sons will then carry them out. This perhaps consists of bathing themselves in medicines left by their father, while they stand on the roof of his house. Sometimes, the natives say of a lingering case, "Ah, perhaps he has eaten of a tortoise's heart!" knowing the phenomenon of the tortoise's heart and believing that by partaking of it, the same property can be conferred on the heart of a man.

When death is manifest, the body is covered with a cloth by a brother, a son, or some other person in attendance. The eyes are closed, the mouth shut, and at the present time, the body straightened out. This, however, is a recent practice copied from the Anyanja, Europeans, and Mohammedans.

News of the death must be sent to the chief, and a messenger goes to his village where the chief and his people sit in the village open space. He carries a fowl in his hand. The present of a single fowl always denotes bad tidings. One of the chief's men, seeing the stranger approach with the single fowl, will jump up and take the bird. He is joined by the others and they go away to the cross-roads where they kill the fowl, pluck it, cook it and eat it. In the meantime, the messenger delivers his news to the chief who will produce from his house about eight yards of white calico; if the deceased has been a much respected

[1] Hugh S. Stanner, 'The life-span of negroes', (*Lancet*, April 11, 1914, p. 1052). [2] Vide infra, p. 262.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

code of morals is imparted which is far reaching for the social welfare. Macdonald makes the statement that "when a girl is initiated, she must find some man to be with her on her return; otherwise she will die."[1] Speaking with reserve as to what happened among the Amangoche around Blantyre Mission thirty years ago, I believe that no such practice is or was part of the Machinga Yao ceremonies. I have heard similar stories from other Europeans but I am inclined to discredit the whole idea as a practice among any section of Yao. Of the Anyanja, I cannot speak with the same conviction. Similarly I believe that the practice of artificial dilatation of the vagina is foreign to the Yao though possibly introduced in some places from the Swahili.

At *Lupanda* and *Chiputu*, the youth have to undergo a good deal of hardship which is all for their benefit, but year by year, as civilization progresses, greater numbers forego these ceremonies. Their manners and morals suffer in consequence, and one is forced to acknowledge with the "old people" that the younger generation, decked in European clothes, with an air of smug self-conceit, no longer shows that decorum and self-respect which characterise the older, unsophisticated natives. My experience with regard to the attitude of natives to their initiation ceremonies differs from those related in *Africana* and I am afraid that Macdonald's native friends[2] were laughing at the inquisitiveness of the white man and not at their own experience.

In the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* for 1913,[3] Dr. Davey and I gave a short account of part of the ceremony at *Lupanda*. Since then, through the friendliness of some of the chiefs in Zomba district, I have been present at several more ceremonies. I have collected a number of fresh observations and made a complete set of sketches of the *inyago* or images in relief made on the ground at one of these ceremonies. I have also a complete account of the boys' ceremonies from a celebrated master of ceremonies or *m'wichila* as he is called, named Mlemala (Kumpika) of Che-chamba, in his own words, with his own songs. In writing down the songs, I have simply recorded the words, without giving the many full and partial repeats, and I have never attempted to score down the airs to which they are sung.

In the account given below I shall follow Mlemala's practice, giving such variations as I myself have observed. It will be understood that each *m'wichila* has his own way of doing things so that there may be many variations in detail.

Lupanda: Every year, a certain number of boys in a group of villages reach the age at which the ceremony is commonly performed. In response to requests made by the village headmen, the chief appoints a date on which the *unyago* shall be held; this is usually towards the end of the dry season (September) but before the long grass of the bush has been burnt, as this affords the necessary privacy to those taking part.

[1] Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 126. [2] Ibid., p. 130.

[3] H. S. Stannus and J. B. Davey, 'The initiation ceremony for boys among the Yao of Nyasaland', (Jour. Anth. Inst., London, 1913, vol. 43, p. 119–128).

3: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

woman guardian shows to her man red and white beads in her hand and tells him that white indicates health while red means sickness, thereby pointing out to him their deep-rooted beliefs in the diseases associated with intercourse or association with women during menstruation. 881 842

Then follows a test of manhood. The woman guardians put little pieces of stick (*lukwi* = sticks or firewood) on their heads and sing: [533 539]

"Ngampe mkwampa lukwi lwa mauku'chawuno liu!"
"I must give my wife (when sick) firewood of the *mauku* although it gives lots of ashes!"

What is meant is that when his wife is ill, the husband should fetch the firewood even though he does not know which woods give least ash; the *mauku* tree gives many ashes. The little piece of wood a few inches long with a notch in the middle is then handed to the young man by his guardian. He places it on the ground in front of him, kneels down, and with a small axe he attempts to divide the stick at the notch. If he is successful, he is greeted with cheers, clapping, and much rejoicing. By proving his power to hit straight, he has also established his manhood; it is prophesied that he will soon have children. Should he miss through nervousness, shouts of derision welcome him and his guardian shows her disgust with his performance. If he is a young fellow well-liked in his village, he may be allowed to make a second attempt. After this ceremony, each couple bathes each other in their shelters by pouring water over the head and body without removing the clothes, thus making brotherhood. Forever after the man must treat this woman with great respect, must not address her for some time, and then only after making her a small present.

The woman guardian picks up the two pieces of the broken *lukwi* and on the morning before they all leave *Chiputa*, the mother or sister of the young man gives her a string of red or white beads saying, "These are to bind up the bundle of wood." The man's guardian binds up the pieces of wood with the beads and gives it to her man. When they have returned to the village, they go to the young man's wife and he presents them to her. The guardian, however, steps in and slips off the beads which she keeps, while the wife, pleased at her husband's success, drops the two pieces of wood into the fire.

During the weeks that the girl *usili* remain under instruction in the village, those young men who have been *ku-lukwi* sleep in one big enclosure away from their wives and do not cohabit until after the second return from *Chiputa* is made.

Another *ku-lukwi* test sometimes, I believe, introduced into Yao ceremonies but really one practiced by the Mpotola people and not proper to the Yao, is as follows: [177]

The guardian lies on the ground, wearing a small loin-cloth, and holding beads in her clenched hands, red in one, white in the other. Her man standing at her feet, bends over her and projects saliva on to her abdomen through a rolled up leaf held between his lips, at the same time choosing one of her hands. If he chooses the hand containing the white beads, he is hailed with delight as a man indeed, but should he choose the hand containing

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

Strophanthus is specially reserved for poisoning arrows and it is doubtful if it is ever given by mouth; *Kombe* is the name used in this country, but there are two species of strophanthus in Nyasaland, *Strophanthus kombe* and *Strophanthus courmontii*. The seeds and bark are used and, less commonly, the root. They are mixed with the roots of a shrub called *Ntsazimba*, pounded together and boiled, and the liquid used to anoint the arrows. The use of poisoned arrows is a Manyanja custom adopted to some extent by the Yao.

A number of poisons are also employed in catching fish, *Nyungu* and *Mtuta* being the most common, also *Kamsimbila Ngachi* (*Nkadzi*, Chin.), and *Chingenge*.

Witchcraft. In my article on the Anyanja,[1] reference is made to witchcraft and *mfiti*. Beside the Nyanja *mfiti* or the Yao *mauwi*, all tribes as far as I know in Nyasaland have firmly fixed among their beliefs, the conception of the supernatural human-flesh eater. It is a little difficult to define the term *mfiti* or *mauwi*, as it has come to have the somewhat generalised sense of one who practices witchcraft, but the original meaning is defined by Scott,[2] a person who has acquired the knowledge of occult medicine by which he can kill his fellow men; "what makes the power so dreaded is not that the *mfiti* exercises this power for reasons of spite but (as is supposed), to eat the body of his victim." It is at once interesting to note that the word *mfiti* does not belong, according to Scott, to the personal class of nouns but to the *pa-as* class, which seems to imply that they believe a *mfiti* to be something outside the idea of a person. Among the Anyanja in Zomba district, however, the word belongs to the first class of nouns (the personal class) as also does *mauwi* in Chiyao.

The natives believe that any man in a village may be a *mfiti* or it might be more correct to say, is capable of changing into a *mfiti*. *Ufiti* is the state of being a *mfiti*; in Chiyao, *uauwi*.

As I have pointed out under *Diseases*, practically all illness and death are thought to be due to the machinations of some person or persons. The inciting motive which may cause a man to compass the death of another may be spite, revenge, etc., or the desires of *uauwi*. Until recent years, when the Government legislated to put down witchcraft, the charges of *uauwi* were everyday occurrences. Whether or not the prevalence of the idea of cannibalism has any substance in correspondingly frequent practice has never been and now probably never will be surely proved. Duff Macdonald believes it to be so.[3] It is true that native graves have been and are still rifled and that the graves of some Europeans have been so opened in the past, as I have learned from eyewitnesses. It seems probable that the graves were tampered with by natives with the object of removing the human remains, possibly to be eaten or to obtain portions of the body to use as charms. Mr. L. T. Moggridge,

[1] 'Notes on some tribes of British Central Africa,' op. cit., p. 203.
[2] Op. cit., p. 845.
[3] Africana, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 213-214.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

and the baskets and pots. A wooden dish *ndiri* may be seen occasionally, but of late years, this has been generally replaced by enamelled articles.

Around the entire hut, or simply enclosing a yard behind it, there is often a fence about five feet high. In the enclosure thus formed, many household duties are performed, such as the pounding and sifting of grain. The grain store *nguluo* often stands in this yard with the pigeon-loft and possibly a hen-house or goat kraal; these are sometimes found in the open space at the front of the house. If a grain store is built within the hut itself, it is then known as *mbungu*. Near the pigeon-loft will be seen a pole with prongs supporting an old pot with water for the pigeons to drink. In a tree in the bush nearby, there may stand a beehive, consisting of a bark cylinder. Similar cylinders are sometimes used as pigeon-houses.

The large pots for brewing beer are usually set in the yard or on the back veranda, together with a basket of split bamboo for carrying fowls, *chitelele* (Yao and Chin.).

Gourds. Gourds are grown in the village for use as vessels of various kinds. Different shapes serve different purposes; names are given them according to use rather than shape, though these more or less coincide. Ladles for water or beer, *mawale* or *ngwo* (*nawero* or *chiko*, Chin.) are usually long-handled gourds (Pl. XIV, figs. 7, 8, 9). Drinking vessels for beer, etc. *chipanda* and a specially large one, *ntuwelo* are usually of the shape illustrated in Plate XIV, fig. 1; sometimes they are like fig. 5, but this shape is more commonly used for water. *Lipache*, the type illustrated by fig. 2, is also used for drinking or for holding gruel. Oil flasks, *chiani* (*inepe*, Chin.), are usually of the double-bellied type (figs. 4 and 6). Salt bottles, *chitumbo* (*chipere*, Chin.), are similar to oil flasks. Rattles, *senje*, used at dances etc., are also made from gourds, often from those with tuberosities (fig 3). Other uses for gourds include pipes, snuff-boxes, enema funnels, and resonators for musical instruments.

Pottery. The art of pot-making appears to have been known to the Yao for a very considerable period. There is no history relating to its introduction among them. The art is in the hands of the Yao women. As among all Nyasaland tribes, a particular kind of clay is used and no admixture with any binding substance is made. The pots are simply moulded by hand from base to brim and, without the aid of any wheel or other device, wonderful symmetry is attained.

After drying, the pots are fired by being set on their bases on the ground and a wood fire is made round and above them. They are then sprinkled with an infusion of the *nguwuyo* or *ntumbi* tree, a head of millet being used for the purpose, after which the pots are set upon a fire and millet husks are thrown into them and allowed so to be incinerated. These customs, a kind of christening of the pots, "insure their turning out well."

No glaze of any kind is used, but they are sometimes colored red by boiling with a pigment called *nguwo*, prepared from a red sediment found in sluggish streams. The preparation of *nguwo* is in the hands of men and women who make a trade of it, such as a man called

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3. *M'tungwi*: this large double basket one half of which fits over the other like a cover, is now very common among the Yao; it was copied from the Swahili *kijumundo*. The body is made in the same way as the other baskets, but each half has a broad rim of wood which is always cut profusely into patterns (Pl. XVI, fig. 13, and Pl. XVII).

4. *Chimumbi*: the beer mug, a small hemispherical basket rendered waterproof by smearing with a sticky substance prepared from the pounded stem of the *mpono* tree or from the root of the *mpona* plant mixed with charcoal (Pl. XVI, fig. 12).

5. *Lisungulo* (*lupe*, Chin.): the beer strainer made in the shape of *chikungu*, but the strips of bamboo forming the warp and the weft are of different thicknesses, so that spaces are left for the fluid to run through (Pl. XVI, fig. 14).

Mats. In years gone by the Yao made a rough kind of plaited matting of split reeds called *chipanda*; it is not seen today. Another type of mat seldom used today is the *lichiko* (*chiko*, Chin.), made of a number of reeds of equal length bound together by several rows of interlacing string (Pl. XVI, fig. 7). Reeds are also used to make the *mpasa* (*mpasa*, Chin.) (Pl. XVI, fig. 10). When dry they are split and fastened out with the smooth surfaces all on one side. A number of reeds so flattened lying side by side are then sewed together with native string, and form a clean, smooth mat for sitting or sleeping.

Mats made of plaited strips of sun-dried palm leaf are now in common use, the art of making them, I believe, having been introduced from the coast. Large mats of this kind called *liwali* are used in the chief's courtyard (Pl. XVI, fig. 9). Smaller ones called *mkeke*, or by the old people *ndanga*, made from the leaf of the wild date palm, are used for sleeping (Pl. XVI, fig. 6). Since the advent of the European, mat making has become an important industry, and *liwali* and *mkeke* are to be found in every European house.

A still finer kind of mat, circular in plan and stained in patterns, has lately been introduced by the Swahili. Red and black dyes are generally used; the red is either *mpona*,[1] or a stain called *mchenda* prepared from the bark of a tree called *mwenje*; the black dye is made from the root of a vine, *likwanga* (*chikwa*, Chin.), the itch bean.

The matting made of these strips of palm leaf is in the form of a ribbon from three to six inches wide, according to the fineness of the strips. The ribbon of matting is sewed into the form of a cylinder by plaiting the edges of the ribbon together in a large spiral. This cylinder of matting is then cut down one side and laid flat, and the cut edges finished off with a plaited mat border (Pl. XVI, fig. 8). It will be seen that, owing to the way they are made, these mats are never quite rectangular. The ribbon of matting used for the circular mats is narrower still and sewed round and round in a flat spiral fashion.

Cloth. The Yao in years gone by made a woven cloth, but the art has long since died out, and I have never seen a piece of native-made cloth. I imagine, inasmuch as bark-cloth is still worn by the poorer people, that the native-made woven cloth was only worn by the few, probably the chiefs. The older cloth was undoubtedly bark-cloth, worn, as I

[1] Vide supra, p. 341.

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two feet high and fifteen inches in diameter, hollowed out from above for about two-thirds of its length. Many are made with a kind of base or stand, and some have roughly carved bosses on the outside; these are called "the breasts," doubtless emblematical of women, a large part of whose life is spent in preparing flour (Pl. XV, fig. 15). 412 [532]

The fire-stick. Matches are becoming more widespread year by year and soon the knowledge of how to make fire with a fire drill will be lost. The method employed among the Yao is as follows: a flat surface is cut on a piece of partly rotted wood. In the middle of this a small depression is made, and on one side of the piece of wood a groove is cut leading from the flat cut surface. The piece of wood is held firmly on the ground by one person with a piece of old scorched cloth or some charred sticks at the base of the groove. A second person, by rolling a stick of hard wood rapidly between his hands with the point directed against the depression on the flat surface in which a little sand has been placed, drills a hole into it. The heat developed is sufficient to cause the powdered rotten wood to start smouldering. This is then turned out on the cloth, which is gently waved in the air till it catches fire (Pl. XV, fig. 16). 372 [177]

Boats. With the exception of a small coracle-like vessel, *likuŋwa*, made of rough bark and used for crossing streams, the Yao have no boats. The dug-out canoes which they use at the present day are made for them by the Anyanja. In addition to the bark boat, they use a kind of raft made from the pith tree, *bunguwa*. 501 [439]

Tobacco. The use of tobacco in some form is universal among the tribes of Nyasaland and the Yao are no exception. The method of use varies among the different peoples; smoking, chewing, and snuffing are all practised, but while the Anyanja is essentially a pipe-smoker, the Yao takes snuff, although I think only lately he has also taken up smoking and chewing. A short time ago, a Yao who chewed would have been laughed at. The Anyanja do not chew but take snuff to a certain extent; the Angoni who do not smoke or chew are inveterate snuff-takers; the Atumbuka, Atonga, Asenga, and Ankonde are pipe-smokers and in lesser degree snuff-takers. 276

Tobacco is called *sono* (*fodia*. Chin.). It is prepared by sun-curing the leaf, which is then rolled up into a twist and allowed to dry further. The common tobacco pipe consists of a clay bowl, often ornamented, and a reed stem; it was formerly called *ekilonga*, but is now known as *kalio* (Pl. XV, fig. 11). For hemp, *chamba*, the Yao use a water pipe called *ndumbu* (*ngundu*, Chin.); this consists of a bamboo water container from which projects a reed stem surmounted by a clay bowl (Pl. XV, fig. 12). The word *ndumbu* is also used for a tobacco pipe.

When tobacco is chewed, a little lime paste *msukulu* made from snail shells is put in the mouth "to bring out the flavor," a small clay jar being used to carry the *msukulu*.

Both the Wayao and the Anyanja prepare snuff by grinding the broken-up tobacco leaves with a stone in a potsherd; the powder is then turned out into another sherd and warmed over a fire. A few drops of a preparation called *mapudi* is added for flavor. *Mapudi* is

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Peas, *nsoma* (*Pisum sativum*), are grown in abundance. There are two other varieties: *mbasa* (groundnuts), and *chindawiro*.

Sweet potatoes: *mbatata* (*Ipomaea batias*), of which the natives are very fond; they distinguish a red and a white variety, *mbatata nyanjajwa* and *mbatata nyasinsaru*.

The tuber-like root of a bush called *nguombo* is also eaten, likewise the young underground shoots of a palm tree. The leaves of the sweet potato and the leaves of many wild growing plants are collected by the women and cooked like spinach; the flowers of pumpkins are used in a similar way. Of fruits eaten, the banana, *lipombo*, takes first place. A very large number of species of *Eumusa* are grown, including *mukumbuka*, *mbinga*, *sukali*, *nasiri nampanga*, *kabuta* a dwarf banana, *kaigwa* a wild banana, and *mbenji*, the plantain. The paw-paw is found all over the district. There are several varieties of pumpkin, *lipungu*, including *mbonda*, *chindondoli*, and a very large species called *mbua wa ngwena*, "the crocodile's head." Varieties of cucumbers include *lingaka* and *lukhungulu*.

A large number of wild fruits are eaten, among them figs, *lukaju* (*Ficus*), *kiruku* (*Uapaca*), *chitili* and *liunga*, the fruits of two species of *Landolphia*, *matonga* or Kaffir oranges (a species of *Strychnos*), *chikundu*, the fruits of *Hyphaene* (palms), *matuutwa* (*Myrianthus*) a wild tree belonging to the mulberry family, and others, *ndawa*, *matanguendembo*, *ndondowoko*, *chingulungulu*, *chindogolya*, *malewele*, *likwenda*, etc. The seeds from the heads of bulrushes (*Typha*) are mashed up and eaten.

All fish are eaten except the *ngunga*, which always causes urticaria.

The flesh of all the antelopes, of cows, sheep and goats is eaten greedily; only bushbuck is avoided by some people as it is said to cause a skin eruption. Elephant is shunned by many on account of its rough skin, also rhinoceros because of the ulcers which it often has on its body, and hippopotamus on account of the marks on its back which are thought to be akin to leprosy. People eating the flesh of these animals are supposed often to sicken with leprosy, the pachydermatous skin, the ulceration or anaesthetic depigmented patches of that disease being reproduced, as the case may be. Few will eat pig or warthog on account of the digging habits of these animals. It is thought they may sometimes grub up bodies from graves. These flesh taboos may be due to Mohammedan influence. The lion, hyaena, and fox no one would touch, as they are supposed to be connected with *usewi*,[1] but the heart of the lion might be eaten to acquire courage. Few will touch leopard flesh, but Kasungu's descendants do so. All will eat of the flesh of the serval cat but very few of the common wild cat. The rock rabbit, *nguenguwiro* (*mbiru*, Chin.), is refused by most Yao as it is a "beast without shame," having no tail to hide what should in decency be hid. Very few will partake of the baboon, but monkey is acceptable to many. A few reject porcupine, supposing they will break out in spots, while the zebra may cause stripes, and none will touch the skunk. No one eats *sunje*, a mouse that is believed to die if it crosses a path. All kinds of rats are eaten, but the shrew-rat and cane-rat only by boys. Snakes

[1] Vide supra, p. 336.

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no one will touch. With the exception of carrion birds such as the crow and the hawk, most birds are considered fit to eat. The hornbill is not eaten, as it is supposed to carry part of a corpse on its nose.[1] Fowls form a regular article of diet, but some taboos in this connection are mentioned elsewhere.

Eggs are eaten only by children and old people; that is, by those outside the child propagating age. Milk is never consumed in any form. They say, "What a disgusting habit, to suck the juice of an animal while it is still alive!"

Pregnant women will not eat certain things lest the child be born with some deformity, such as the snout of a pig, or the white stripes of a zebra.

Art and decoration. Sculpture can hardly be said to be an art known to the Yao. The only piece of stone work I have ever seen was a granite boulder, on the surface of which cup-holes had been made for the game of *Bao* (Pl. IV, fig. 4).

Of late years, individuals here and there have begun carving wooden figures of men and animals. The Yao, of course, make no idols. It is uncertain exactly how long it is since any of these people started producing wooden figures. I should think that this art has sprung up within the past twelve or thirteen years, that is to say, since there has been a market for them among European residents. In the first place only natives and some of the common animals, the eland and leopard, were represented; since then, many animals and Europeans have been copied. The native is extraordinarily clever in reproducing characteristic features in dress, etc., so that a Portuguese is easily distinguished from an Englishman. The little models in ivory of animals and native household objects, made by the Swahili people on Lake Nyasa, have never been copied by the Yao. Neither do they make clay images of men and cattle as do the Zulu-descended Angoni and cattle-keeping Wankonde. No native would allow any wooden figure to remain in his house for fear of ill luck; the women especially would look askance at them, fearing some misfortune in their next pregnancy. Little wooden figures of birds, however, are sometimes seen affixed to the point of the hut roof.

The making of carved figures, then, is of recent introduction, or rather is a recent event in the evolution of the Yao, as they were not taught but self-inspired in the work.

The ability to make representations of objects by drawing appears in the same way to originate spontaneously here and there as a sport. Natives with a talent for drawing are found among all the tribes, and among the Yao, it is said, there have always been some who have been able to draw. Naturally enough, their reproductions are made on the walls of their houses, and their subjects are generally animals of the forest, sometimes men and houses, or some other object of particular interest[2] (Pl. VIII, fig. 1). I also give sketches of some other drawings I have noted (Pl. XVIII); the line figure of a man at Makanjila's

[1] Vide supra, p. 337.

[2] Cf. A. Werner, 'A Native Painting from Nyasaland,' *Journ. Afric. Soc.*, London 1909, vol. 8, no. 30, p. 180–182.

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of bamboo fastened together at one end on the flat side by binding with string, the free ends being sharpened to form the teeth of the comb. If the fastened end is ornamented with beads sewed on in patterns, the comb is called *lisemelo* (*lu-semelo*, to comb). *Lisemelo* for *shinguembete* from *ku-nguembete*, to be sticky, is the name of a small comb worn purely for ornament. On either side of the base of this comb, pieces of wood variously shaped are glued with the sticky juice from the root of the *shinguembete* tree. In this way, a sort of inlay is produced. Pieces of tin cans are sometimes substituted for wood. Women occasionally wear in their hair the small *shimondo* knife used for tattooing and shaving.

The native takes readily to perfumes of European introduction, but previously he was not an entire stranger to the use of such ointments. *Mbako*, the bulbous root of a kind of grass which grows near water, contains some aromatic principle which has a pleasant odor. The stem is beat around and fixed into the belt; this is then covered with beads and slung around the neck. *Mirongwe*, the Mlanje cedar, is also used, as well as the fruit of a shrub called *shirongwe*. These substances are scraped into the castor oil used for anointing, and give it a pleasant odor.

No pigments are used on the body. As a sign of great rejoicing, the head and face and perhaps the whole body are covered with ashes, but the natives do not even paint the face with flour on ordinary occasions.

Bands of beads were worn round the head, either as a simple band or a band finished off with a bunch in one spot, with a tassel. Finger rings are worn made of ivory, shell, hoof and horn, lead, and iron wire. There is also a great variety of bracelets and anklets, a list of which is given below.

Chipemba: made of plaited grass, worn chiefly by little girls and women who cannot afford more expensive bracelets. As many as half a dozen may be worn on the wrist.

Likenguelo (pl. *makenguelo*): single circles of solid brass, one half to three quarters of an inch in diameter, worn by women usually as anklets, one or two on each limb. They may still be seen on some of the old women, but as they cause much discomfort, they have gone out of fashion. A man used to be very proud to see his wife adorned with so much wealth and she was content to be so hobbled by her vanity. The hammering up and pulling open of the *likenguelo* circle in order to remove it cost a fowl.

Chilwenge: a brass bracelet of small calibre; *liwenge* (pl.) signifies a spiral cylinder made from the same thick brass wire covering the entire forearm.

Likwinjili: like *chilwenge* of thin brass or iron wire, worn on arms and ankles.

Ching'ondo: a bracelet of fine brass wire wound round a circular core. All the brass comes from the coast.

Likoso: a large ivory bracelet worn by men and women.

Ulwenge: ("stiff tail hairs of an animal"), the bracelet made of the tail hairs of the elephant or the gnu.

Lichoko: the bracelet made from elephant hoof.

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that she is tattooed more profusely on the buttocks and legs. The circlet of beads was formerly made like suspender with a bark-cloth core, called *mtumbo* or *mbudo* (to-wish, to slip off), referring to the *mbudo* being slipped off over the legs. The fashion now is to wear single strings of beads; each string is of one color but all the strings are different and perhaps number a dozen or more.

Lipemba: a bead belt three-inches wide, worn by Yao women near Lake Nyasa. A bead apron, *kanjere*, is also worn by them but not near Zomba (Pl. VI, fig. 2).

A woman removes her beads when she is "unclean," that is: (a) during the menstrual period, (b) during the period of mourning for a near relative when coitus is forbidden, (c) before the birth of a child and afterwards until such time as she may resume intercourse with her husband.

A large variety of beads has long been used by the Yao. There are some rarely seen now which were much prized in years gone by, while others are of quite recent introduction. There is no evidence that they themselves made beads and there are few which are probably not of European manufacture.

Clothing. The Yao used bark-cloth before the introduction of woven materials. The older people may still be seen in it and it is used in most of the ceremonies. At one time, they also used to weave a cloth called *likamundo* from a native cotton plant. This has been given up since the introduction of imported materials.

For the method of wearing cloth, see Pl. II, fig. 2. The very poorest people wear only a strip of calico round the peuenda, held in position by a string round the waist hanging long behind and in front; this is called *cubutha*. Yao women, when menstruating, wear under this a little piece of cloth called *likambi*; it is only worn at this time and not always as in certain other tribes.

Warfare. Fighting has naturally played a large part in the life of the Yao as among other African tribes, but at no time were these people a trained fighting race. Warfare was of a desultory character consisting mostly of raids by one headed chief upon another. A party of men belonging to a chief at enmity with another, meeting some of his followers would challenge them, "*Akombe*, who are you for?" The name of the rival chief in answer was the sign for battle to begin. A false answer would never be given to gain an advantage. When about to throw a spear, the thrower calls to his adversary.

The Yao have possessed guns for a long time. Going out to fight, the Yao used to leap from one foot to the other, and spin their guns around in their hands. They made their own stocks for the rifles. They also used to make a small, cast-iron cannon about three feet long, called *kambala*, "a little cow." It was carried in the arms and was touched off by a torch. Drums called *ungoi* were taken into battle. There is an old war drum at Malenya's village, taken in 1895 by the old Malenya from a Mang'anja chief called Mbukumbo who lived near Lake Chiuta. Since then, this drum has always gone into battle with Malenya. Around it his men would dance and anyone who had killed a man in battle would run up to it and spit upon it in celebration.

Both before and after the introduction of guns, the Yao used spears, *liyunga*, and bows, *uhanja*. The spear is a five foot long throwing spear with metal head and wooden shaft. No shield was used. Bows and arrows are made from the wood of the *tass* or *pimbinguile* tree. The string is made of tendon. A double-bellied bow called *uhanja wa mbawa* was sometimes used, but, I believe, originally came from the Anyanja. The arrows, *mpamba*, have a metal arrow-head, and were often poisoned with *kombe*. 411

Hunting. The same weapons are used in hunting: the gun, the spear, and the bow and arrow. Smaller bows and arrows made with bamboo or reed shaft are also employed for shooting birds; one of the arrows has a blunt wooden head and serves to stun the bird. 224 411

From the Anyanja, the Yao learned the use of a harpoon for spearing the hippopotamus. The harpoon is a heavy spear-head of iron about eighteen inches long, attached to a rope and float. From the Anyanja, also, was learned the use of the falling block with spear for killing hippo. [177]

Elephants are caught in staked pits, and the larger antelopes are similarly trapped in pits with the sides sloping inwards towards the bottom, so that as the animal falls lower and lower with expiration, it is eventually suffocated. 224

Small buck are driven by dogs into nets set for long distances in the forest, and then speared or shot. Traps are also set for these smaller antelope and for many other small animals, rodents, etc. Birds are shot or trapped. Bird-lime is also employed. It is prepared from the juices of a number of trees by pounding the vegetable matter in water; the sticky mass so made is applied to sticks or poles. The sticks are placed near drinking places so that the birds alighting to take water become entangled. The poles are affixed to trees so that they appear to be the topmost boughs; this the native does, recognising the common habit of birds to sit on the very top of trees. The strength of the bird-lime is made according to the size of the bird he wishes to catch. [231] 223

Fishing. I am not sure how far the Yao is a natural fisherman. Not long ago he used only a many-pronged spear to catch his fish. Since then, he has acquired from the Anyanja the knowledge of making fish-traps and nets, and of using the fish poison. When the Yao came to live and intermarry among the Anyanja, there was one practice of the latter which they would not adopt and which caused a good deal of ill-feeling. A Mang'anja man coming home after fishing always used to prepare the fish and, leaving some ready to cook, he cooked others for his wife, bringing her water at the same time to wash her hands. After eating her own fish, she cooked the rest for her husband. A Yao would never cook for his wife. 226 [568 568]

Traps. The following is a list of some of the traps I have found in use among the Yao. The sketches will serve to explain their mechanism better than a lengthy description. Some are very ingeniously made, and most recall similar traps made in other parts of the world. 224

1. *Lulenji lwa litunda*, a trap for the cane-rat (Pl. XIX, fig. 1).

2. *Lulenji lwa mbindi*, a trap for sharp-toothed gnawing animals, so called from

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224 *ukindi*, a joint (*of* bamboo) which slides down the string next to the noose so that the captured animal cannot bite or gnaw through the string (Pl. IV, fig. 3; Pl. XIX, fig. 2).

3. *Lukwaji* has *mukunde* or *ukilawa*, a trap for water-rats (Pl. XX, fig. 7).

4. *Lukwaji* has *ngumbi*, a trap for the partridge (Pl. XX, fig. 8).

223 5. *Chijumba cha ijuni*, "the house for birds," also used to trap small animals (Pl. XX, fig. 2).

6. *Lukwaji* has *lukusi*, a trap for the neck (*of* guinea fowl) (Pl. XX, fig. 4).

7. *Lukwaji* has *chilikwata*, a trap for the tread (*of* the guinea-fowl); *ku-likwata*: to put the foot down, to tread. The string square is about 8 × 4 inches (Pl. XXI, fig. 6).

8. *Liwewa*, a trap made of split bamboo. A bird going to pick up the grain is caught by the head when the trap is released by the string which the trapper pulls (Pl. XXI, fig. 3).

9. *Lwau* has *ijuni* or *ngwa*, a bird-trap made of netting on a hinged frame-work, operated by a string (Pl. XXI, fig. 4).

[224] 10. *Lilwa*, a falling stone trap for mice. Rats are said to pull off the trap with their tails and are never caught (Pl. XXI, fig. 1).

10a. The same trap set for catching birds (Pl. XXI, fig. 2).

11. *Mulolaya*: (*lolola* = hanging loose), a noose for small birds, set on trees (Pl. XX, fig. 1).

[674] 12. Fowl thieves use a very simple contrivance consisting of two grains of maize threaded on one end of a piece of string some six inches long, at the other end of which is attached a leaf folded up into the form of a cone. The fowl, enticed by the maize, swallows the two grains and the attached string, so that the cone is drawn over its head; it is then helpless and is easily picked up by the thief, who has only to pull on the string to remove the leaf.

224 13. *Chipwamba*, a hollow cylinder of wood with noose activated by a wooden spring, for catching rats (Pl. XXI, fig. 5).

14. *Chipata*, a similar trap made of bark, for mice.

15. *Lilwa*: a plaited bamboo cone into which a rat forces its head to get at the bait, but finds, when it tries to withdraw, that it is caught by sharpened pieces of bamboo projecting backwards into the cone (Pl. XX, fig. 6).

227 16. *Mwanyesi*, a fish-trap of the same design, from the Anyanja (Pl. XX, fig. 5).

17. *Mwipa*, a fish-trap on the lobster-pot principle, often set in gaps in a fence built across a stream, copied from the Anyanja trap called *mwee* (Pl. XXI, fig. 7).

[177] 18. *Njisi*, also I think from the Anyanja, consists of a long basket-work, extinguisher-like arrangement which is slipped down over a swarm of small fish; the head is introduced through an aperture in one side and the fish removed (Pl. XXI, fig. 6).

524 called *lomay* makome or namkome, the words given by Dr. Sanderson, are not known to the Yao in this district. There is a simple game played among the Anyanja children and therefore called *chisima* (childish or for children), but the common game played is more difficult as shown by Dr. Sanderson. *Mchombwe* is being partly displaced by a Swahili variety called *kete*, or often by the Yao, *ulere* (Pl. IV, fig. 4). I may here also point out that the words *mwawe* and *nanke*, which Dr. Sanderson uses for the Manyanja and Angoni varieties of the game, are often replaced by *nyiwe* and *tawe*.

857 Yao children play at keeping house in little grass *structures*, made near the village or in the fields, while their parents work. Children who can only toddle may be seen practising dancing the steps of their elders. The boys play with miniature bows and arrows made of a kind of grass, *mwe*, and make a toy dart-tube, *uti* (Pl. XXII, fig. 5). Little dug-out canoes eighteen inches long are made for them to sail in pools.

857 526 Among the lads in a village, games of fighting are much indulged in; two sides are opposed and their weapons are of various kinds. Sometimes each is armed with a length of bamboo, into the hollow end of which sand and pebbles are put, representing powder and shot. This end of the bamboo is then rapidly swung in the direction of the "enemy" and will discharge the sand and pebbles into the face of the opponent. This is called *uti ja masanga* ("gun for sand"). The boys are sometimes armed with maize cobs for throwing at each other.

Chinese is another form of fighting. Armed with a collection of small stones, each flicks his stone at the enemy with very good aim, using the fore-finger of the right hand to propel the stone, the index of the left hand acting as trigger and the left thumb as the spring. The name comes from *tar* the sound of the whizzing stone as it goes through the air.

In a pool opposing sides fight with rudimentary syringes made of bamboo, driving streams of water into each other's faces. This is called *ipiswe*, from the sound of the stream of water, or *uti ja mani* ("gun for water"). In the water they also play *chitwingichinga*, (*lu-twingichinga*, to press down). Boys are ranged on two sides; each tries to "*soli...*" one of the opposing side and put him down into the water, holding him down between his legs. An old water trick is for a boy to go down to the bottom and there squat with his face turned upwards, the mouth stretched wide open by the fingers; viewed from the surface the face looked flat and very grotesque. There is also diving for *mamva*, *chitiwichila* (*lu-tiwichila*, to dive for).

A kind of skipping, called *chiwewe*, from *we! we!* the sound of the rope as it goes round in the air, is a great favourite. A man with a heavy rope about fifteen feet long, with a bundle of grass at the free end enclosing a lump of heavy wood or stone, swings it round and round his head. The faster it goes, the higher it will fly out, while the boys in turn run in and jump over it. Sometimes a boy is caught by the rope and gets a nasty blow, occasionally resulting in a broken limb.

3:Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

Taking advantage of the natural inquisitiveness of youth, a favorite trick for making money is for a man to appear in a village making pretense of having a peep-show, something contained in a covered basket or in a cloth. On payment of some small amount, the youth is allowed to peep in, maybe only to see a dead mouse; finding he had been "done," he of course bursts out laughing and, anxious that all his companions should also be "done," he does not "give it away" and so the peep-show man makes quite a good living.

Yao girls play with dolls of two kinds, *lilolo*, made from little gourd-like fruits called *likuqu*, and others called *mwanache*, "a child," made from maize cobs. These dolls they carry about on their backs as mothers do their children. *Lilolo* is made of three of these little spherical fruits glued together with beeswax; on the one which represents the head, seed, red and blue, of the *ulenguje* tree are cemented in rows to represent hair, and often beads, as in the *nshanku* method of hair-dressing. One sees similar dolls made for the children of other tribes. Thus, among Mombera's Angoni, a doll called *mwana*, "a child," is made in a dumb-bell form of two small spherical gourds joined by a bundle of sticks bound together with string and wax; on the head-piece string is cemented to represent hair. Their children also play with little clay images of cattle and men, a custom they have preserved from their old Zulu ancestors but foreign to the Yao. The Ankonde children have carved wooden dolls not seen in any other tribe. *Mwanache* is made from a maize-cob by shredding the papery coverings of the cob; on these shreds are threaded white and red varieties of maize to represent beads, or the shreds are plaited into a number of tags to represent hair.

Latterly, the children have taken to making hoops and show considerable skill in driving them with a piece of bent reed (Pl. XXII, fig. 8), while the older boys make two-wheeled representations of bicycles with a very clever imitation of all the parts of the machine.

The whipping-top, *mwipilo* or *mwipwipo* (*upuli*, Chin.), is found among the boys' toys. It is made of a conical piece of wood with a flat top and no metal peg. It is started spinning by pulling off the string wound round the top. The whip consists of a piece of string fastened to the end of a stick. Sometimes tops of large size are used, and two boys whip them from opposite sides (Pl. XXII, fig. 4).

A game called *chipute* is played by youths; it takes its name from *ku-puta*, to strike, and refers to the action of striking with a finger the hand in which a bean is guessed to be. A spiral is drawn with the finger in the sand with a central point to represent a village, and a tail-piece prolonged on one side to a second point which represents a slave-market on the coast. Along the line, a number of other points are demarcated to represent sleeping places en route. At the village, two white beans are put to represent the two players and with each is a smaller brown bean to represent his slave. At the slave-market are placed a variety of beans to represent trade-goods, cattle, beads, etc. Each of the two players in turn shakes a single bean in his closed hands and then shows the hands, separating them at the

857 To the index
524 "*Lukwapala lwa ng'anda lwa lwandala mwilumba!*"
539 "(This one is) the leg of an ox which walks on the plain!"

To the thumb:
"*Chimwene*"
"The fifth"

857 524 *Cat's Cradles* are known as *ukinguwa*, "the spider's web" (Pl. XXIII). The position of the string on the hands is as in Position I of Miss Haddon's book and this is followed by Opening A, given by the same author.[1] (Pl. XXIII, figs. 1, 2.) Three methods of arriving at the same figure, which is called "the net," are shown here (Pl. XXIII). Variety C is followed by the making of a knot, figured in C 13, known as "the child." There are probably a number of other forms made by natives, but these, which I saw one of my women patients make, will serve as an example.

539 **Musical Instruments.** The number of instruments proper to the Yao appears to be small, indeed probably only two in number, the *mangwimpwende* and the *chilipenye*, with perhaps the three holed flute, *chitilitiro*.

The former is constructed on the principle of a xylophone; it consists of two trunks of banana trees laid on the ground and held in position by stakes. They are not quite parallel but approach each other somewhat at one end, being from one to two feet apart; on these rest cross-wise a number of pieces of wood of varying thickness and length, kept in position by pegs driven into the banana trunks on each side of each billet. These are struck with sticks by a single player, or by two persons sitting on opposite sides of the instrument. Another variety is found in which the pieces of wood, which may have holes bored in them to effect differences in sound, are arranged over a hole excoped in the ground (Pl. V, fig. 1).

The *chilipenye* consists of a piece of plank hollowed out to form a resonator on which are fixed a number of keys of bamboo or metal of different lengths. These are arranged across a bridge, and the free ends are set in vibration by twanging with the fingers.

[FT] The instrument now most commonly seen is the *ntenje* which was introduced, I think, from the coast about 1890 to 1900. It is a type of guitar.

An instrument played by women — and this again is of recent introduction among the Yao — is the *mkungudu*, which consists simply of a stick of wood about a yard long to which is affixed a single string. One end is held between the teeth, the other in the hand; it is twanged by being struck with the thumb and finger of the other hand close to the mouth, which is opened to different degrees, and gives a variety of notes resembling those of a Jews' harp.

The *chisinj'wempemj'wempe* and drums are referred to under *Dancing*.

[1] Kathleen Haddon, Cat's cradles from many lands, New York, 1930.

3: Stanman D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

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Chindimba: the *chindimba* songs are the favorites among all the older people. They have been in late years partly replaced by others, but, at the present time, there is a tendency to return to them; they are staid in tone and the dance is sedate. *Chindimba* is always played at mournings. While the whole company sits around in a circle with the drums at one side, a couple of people do the dancing in the middle. The drums used are a *chingwanga*, two *ichimwe*, and a *likuti*. With the commencement of drumming, a man well known for his songs steps out into the middle and begins singing; he is followed by another man or maybe a woman who sings a second part; the two singers are generally people who have found that they sing well together. Two such people will be welcomed, and they may sing many songs, while any young upstarts who do not sing well together, will be given to understand that their performance does not meet with approval. People have their favorite songs, and there may be much heart-burning if an old man finds some one else singing a song that he considers especially his own. As they sing, they dance their peculiar shuffling steps. (The words of some of these songs are given later.)

Sukuya: an Angoni dance sometimes danced by the Yao. It resembles *chindimba* in that all sit singing and clapping while, one at a time, men dance in the open space to time given by bamboo sticks knocked together. The songs are all hunting songs.

It is impossible to describe the steps used in all the dances; for each dance, they differ, of course, and except by a cinematograph film, they cannot be reproduced. The movements of the feet are ordinary stepping motions or patting of the ground with the feet, the actual excursions being very small, so that in most cases it is impossible to devise any means of making out the steps. To enable them to perform these steps, they commonly dance with the knees bent, the buttocks protruded behind, and the back arched. In some cases, this attitude is extreme. 514

There is a larger series of dances which, to the uninitiated spectator, appear to resemble each other very closely. The general plan of the dance is as follows. The drums are placed in the middle; around them in a circle are the dancers and outside these, the onlookers. The circle may be thirty or forty strong, composed of men only or of men and women as the case may be. Commonly, the ring of dancers is divided into two halves, each half being headed by a leader who sings the song, all joining in the refrain, while the onlookers do the clapping. When the drums begin, they all walk round in a circle, but at a given signal, one of the drums gives out a new time, and the whole circle starts dancing with short, shuffling movements already described, usually progressing in the circle, sometimes going backwards, sometimes facing the drums or turning right around in the line.

M'lomanda is a dance of, I believe, recent introduction which has replaced to some extent *chindimba*, much to the disgust of the older people who dislike the innovation. They shake their heads and say, "*Chilando chimaalile!*" "The world is finished." The drums used are *likuti*, *ntiputipu*, *mukuse*, and *chingwanga*. It is danced by men and youths only. [177]

N'jonde or, as it was known some years ago, *ngwambuli*, is danced like *mlomanda*, but the

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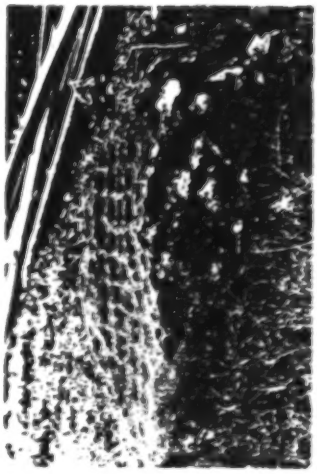
2. A BIT OF YAO LAND



4. GRANITE WORKED WITH CUP-HOLES FOR THE GAME OF *Bao*

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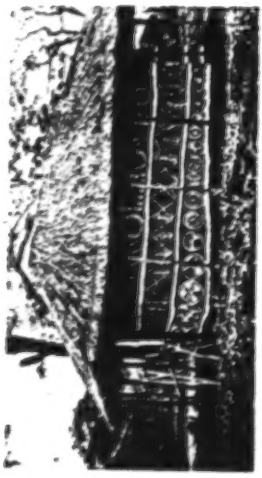

1. A MOHAMMEDAN MOSQUE DECORATED WITH GEOMETRIC DESIGNS OF COAST ORIGIN

3. A SPRING AND NOOSE TRAP FOR SMALL ANIMALS

[End Plate 4]

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

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531

1. A YAO GIRL

2. YAO GIRL WEARING BEAD APRON

[177]
[304]

3. TWO YAO GIRLS WEARING TRADE CLOTH

4. A YOUNG YAO WOMAN

[End Plate 6]

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7 Marevi FR4

case *mwavi* might be administered; if adjudged guilty the accused would be burned on a pile of wood. M 695

Evidence is given without taking any oath; a false witness is not punished. M 696

Justice is occasionally summary. At Mponda's, after conviction of adultery with one of the chief's wives, a man's throat was cut on the spot. Drowning was the usual punishment with Mponda.

Punishments for all offences practically meant payment.

CUSTOMS, SALUTATIONS, ETC.

The correct salutation among Machinga Yao and Mañanja on meeting is clapping the hands, the hands in front of and at right angles to the body parallel to each other, thumbs against the fingers. The clapping should be continued for ten minutes after having passed; after passing a chief it should be continued for half-an-hour. M Y 576

Another form consists in slowly beating the breast with the right hand, the head slightly inclined forward. The lower in station makes salutation first to the higher, a man to a chief, a woman to a man; exception is made in the case of an old woman, who is saluted by the man. Scattered all over the country a raising of one or both arms is a common form of salutation, but is probably only a corruption of the military salute. M Y [554] [888]

Slapping of the nates or thigh with the right hand is also seen, among old men usually. In imploring mercy from, or on the first occasion of meeting, the chief, a man lies prone on the ground and catching the foot of the chief, puts it on his neck—a sign of absolute submission. Women kneel at the approach of a man. Words and expressions of salutation are few—*Moyo* (=heart) being the only old expression used. Now commonly one hears a word (sounding like *mōnē*) probably a corruption of good morning, and the Swahili greeting *SukuAri* with the double hand-shake of Mohammedans. M Y [201] [562] [177]

A man returned to his village after an absence rests awhile, then his wife comes to him and kneeling greets him, *moyo*, her husband returning *moyo*.

Years ago, a man of any importance was received with firing of guns and shouting. A headman is received now with *Ntungululu*, the women wobbling their tongues in their mouths. Ashes are put on the head as a sign of joy. M Y [152]

In the morning the husband and wife do not greet each other, but in the village friends "give each other good morning" (=*Moyo*). On waking in the morning, a woman cracks all her joints (=*Kulima chala*). She then massages her husband and cracks the joints of his fingers. M Y [512] [576]

One man wishing to see another goes to his house, and squatting outside the door cries "*Icho!*" three times (=there), at the same time clapping his hands. If no answer be given he goes away, even though he knows the man is within, no answer meaning that the inmate does not wish to be seen. If invited to enter he does so, the man of the house rises and gives him salutation. He makes small M 574 576

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Maravi FR4

M Y 252 spoon into a clean shallow basket or on to a plate. The *ndiwo* or relish, consisting M Y 264 of vegetables such as beans or a kind of spinach, a little fish or chicken, is cooked in a separate pot, and round these those about to eat collect. Washing their left hands in water, they take some of the porridge and making a sausage shape of it, dip it in the *ndiwo* and then cram it into their mouths.

M Y 217 258 Salt was obtained either from natural deposits or from "salt earth" on a stream bank near Fort Johnston, or from the ashes of burnt *bango* reeds or *machedza*; by a method of percolation through porous pots.

M Y 271 515 The native rather drinks between meals—water. After eating he may wash his mouth out and clean his teeth, using the frayed end of a piece of wood as a brush.

M Y 273 *Alcohol.*—With the exception of the people living on the lower river, who drink fermented palm juice,[1] beer is the common alcoholic beverage. Beer is made from maize (*chimanga*) or millet (*mapira*); the crop of the latter is very largely used for beer making; it makes the best beer and is certainly preferred by Angoni.

Gruel is prepared by boiling flour with water; after an hour leaven (*chimala*) is added fermentation sets in; and it may be drunk the next day; it is the sweet beer, *mtibe* or *ontondera*. On the second day it is again boiled and is allowed to cool; the third day more leaven is added (*chikutika*); the fourth day fresh gruel is made, and the contents of the original pot, now called *ngungu*, is added to it, making two pots of beer. It may be drank the same day while hot or allowed to cool and taken on the second day.

Food-stuffs.

M Y 262

1. Maize (*chimanga*), millet (*mapira*, *mawere*), rice (*mpunga*).
2. Cassava—sweet potato.
3. Beans and peas of many varieties.
4. Pumpkins, cucumbers, melons (*dungu*, *mkuka*, *chibwende*).
5. Many kinds of leaves growing wild—also pumpkin leaves, of which a kind of spinach is made.
6. Bananas (*paw-paw*), sugar cane and reeds are sucked.
7. White ants, locusts, honey.
8. Numbers of small animals are eaten by Chipeta, Angoni, etc. With the spread of Mohammedanism this is going out; rats, mice, hares, rock-rabbit, etc. Chipeta will eat dog, and I once saw one eat baboon. Frogs, shell-fish, snakes, crocodiles, crows, vultures, eagles, are never eaten.
9. Fish (*nsomba*), fresh or dried, is much eaten, thirteen varieties being enumerated.
10. Chickens, ducks, wild birds that they may snare.

M Y [177]

[1] Spirits used to be made by distilling from beer and banana-and palm-juice by means of a pot and a gun barrel.

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Maravi FR4

Gaga, the residue after pounding maize, is eaten by the women. No oils are used in cooking, but of fat and suet any native is very fond. Meat may be dried and smoked if in large quantity: flesh, fish and fowl is commonly roasted on spits; small pieces of chicken may be made into a kind of stew with beans and eaten as the relish. When on a journey the fire is commonly made against a tree. The cooking vessels are cleaned before use, not after. The fried fish eaten is often partly decomposed, and meat which is very high, even with maggots, is cooked and eaten, maggots and all.

Taboo.—Bushbuck is not eaten by many natives, as they say it feeds near graveyards. Fowls are not eaten by some, as this diet causes them to vomit; a snake-catcher never eats vegetables, and at the same time puts medicine on his hands. Many abstain from the flesh of certain animals as certain skin diseases are said to be caused thereby; all such diseases bear the name *mukwaenga*.

A man who loses a relation by drowning takes an oath that he will never again eat fish, and never drink water from such lake, river, etc. Here the idea is of course simply to avoid eating part of the relation.

A Nyanja and Machinga will not eat the flesh of the hippopotamus, because on the body they say there are the marks of a string round the loins and of a mat on his back, adding that long ago he was a man. Animals of prey would never under any circumstances be eaten. Milk used never to be drunk by an adult, as it was said to cause a man to become as a child. A man would not dare to drink woman's milk as it was said he would surely die of dysentery.

Tobacco, etc.—The smoking of tobacco was a custom introduced from the coast. Chewing was general among Machinga and Yao men and women, while the Angoni and Mañanja snuffed. With the tobacco a little lime, made by burning shells, was taken in the mouth. Giddiness and sleepy sensations were experienced after chewing. The Nyasa and Awisa smoke a hubble-bubble, the water vessel being a large sausage-shaped gourd with a reed stem supporting a large bowl of *mbalaru* wood, sometimes very nicely carved (Plate XXVII, Figs. 5 and 7). The Amyanja smokes a pipe with the bowl made of clay and the stem of bamboo (Plate XXVII, Fig. 6); these are made by the women. Tobacco is grown in nearly every village, a large-leaved rather coarse variety; it is sun-dried and rolled up into hollow rings 6 inches in diameter and 3 inches broad. For snuff (*Fodia womunas*) the sun-dried tobacco is further dried over a fire on a pan, when cold it is ground on a stone with a smaller stone by the women, and with it is mixed some ashes of the *ngoza* fig-tree.

At Blantyre I obtained a water-pipe made of bamboo stem; this was the water reservoir; a stem of reed supports a little clay bowl. The mouth is placed over the upper end of the bamboo. Bhang (*cannabis indica*) is smoked in a pipe of this kind.

AGRICULTURE.

The people live by cultivating the soil. Both sexes help in hoeing and planting, the collecting of the crops being mostly done by women. The hoe is the

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Maravi FR4

M Y 501 When a number are working they take time from the front man, the rear man steering with his ordinary paddle. The passengers sit in the middle, a chief towards the stern. They never lose sight of land even in crossing the widest part of the lake. Stones are now used occasionally as anchors up the lake; grass houses are made to shelter canoes. The smaller canoes are 2 feet to 2½ feet high, the very large ones used to be 4 and 5 feet high; except on the lower river, where canoes have ends similarly shaped, they are made with a bow more pointed than the stern and having a beak (Fig. 15). There is no ornamentation and no figure heads.

M Y [422] In every lake-shore or river-side village or collection of huts will be found one or more canoes; these belong to some one man, others using them paying a fee. At the launching of a new canoe, beer is made and the women dance, and medicine is made for its safe journey.

SWIMMING.

M 481 Not even all lake-shore natives swim, though most do. The art is learnt in childhood and not taught. They are not very fast swimmers, and I do not think could swim very far. They sometimes dive head first and practise staying under water. They swim rather like a dog, both arms coming a little out of water, but not a trudgeon stroke; arms are kept straight. They sometimes swim on the side, but never use the ordinary breast stroke.

GAMES.

M Y 524 Several games are played resembling the game of *ubau* introduced from Zanzibar (Mancala); *ubau* is played on a board in which rows of holes have been cut; beans are used as counters.

Mchoumbau.—A game found among Anyanja and Machinga; it may be played on a *ubau* board, but is often played in holes made in the ground with stones. The Angoni game *chipalepase* is played in the same way. At Fort Anderson is a lump of stone in which hollows have been made similar to those made in the ground. It is the only piece of stone-work I know in the country. Children and women play knucklebones (*mdodo*.)

A man tries in one breath to keep saying *mbiri-biri-biri* . . . ., while another makes a pile of stones from another pile of ten, taking one at a time, saying, "To take and put it there makes one," etc. Men play at guessing in which hand an object is hidden, or one out of ten men sitting in a house has to guess with whom a certain object is. No forfeits.

Tandande (=the spider) is cat's cradle.

M Y [177] *Tiali* (hide and seek), one hiding, five or six seeking.

There are no dice games. Cards were introduced from the coast before the advent of Europeans into the country; the games are various and difficult to follow

M Y 526 A slip-shod kind of wrestling is practised by Anyanja youths; the Machinga

7: Hetherwick M-5 (ca.1900) 1902 FT7 Yao FT7

SOME ANIMISTIC BELIEFS AMONG THE YAOS OF BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA.

By the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, M.A., F.R.G.S., of the Blantyre Mission, British Central Africa.

175 The original home of the Yao tribe may be roughly described as the large and lofty plateau which lies to the east of Lake Nyasa, and is bounded by the Rivers Rovuma and Lujenda. Forty years ago, about the time that Livingstone first entered the country, they began to be pressed on the north by the Magwangwara, and on the east by the Makuwa tribes. These invasions caused them to move, [31] some westward down to the shores of Lake Nyasa or the banks of the Upper Shire River, and others southward to the Shire Highlands, Mount Zomba and the eastern slopes of Mount Mlanje. In every case they succeeded in either subjugating or expelling the original Maravi or Mang'anja inhabitants of these districts, and in no case have they lost their own independence.

175 Till about fifty or sixty years ago the Yaos were untouched by any external influences, and when at that time the Arab and coast trader from Kilwa and ●177 Zanzibar began to treat and trade with them they appear to have been little affected by contact with these visitors. Only a few of the younger men aped at [797] following Mahommedan tenets, and these they only grafted on to their still cherished belief in the old faiths of their fathers. The Koran, or a few of its texts, was added to the many other charms they had already hung about their necks. The faith which the first missionaries found them in possession of when they entered the country twenty-five years ago may therefore be held to be the unadulterated creed of the tribe from time immemorial.

774 The foundation of the Yao religion is to be found in the *liwalo*, the soul, shade or spirit which every human being possesses, and which is the inspiring agent in his life. They profess to give no definite description of the nature or characteristics of this soul. In their minds however it is allied with the shadow, and would seem to bear to the body the relation which a picture has to the reality. Their word for a shadow is *chiwilili*, which is also the term that they use to denote a picture, and pictures they associate with the shades or shadows of the dead. I have known natives refuse to enter a room where pictures were hung on [123] the walls "because of the *masoka*, souls, which were in them." The photographic camera was at first an object of dread, and when it was turned upon a group of natives they scattered in all directions with shrieks of terror. "The European,"

563 groups presents a problem to be considered but for the main purposes of this paper a brief comment is sufficient.

The Nyanja people who were allowed to remain in the areas, continued to live in their village communities in much the same way as the Yao did. In fact the Nyanja and the Nguru are so similar in culture to the Yao, that it was possible for them to fit into the Yao social structure fairly easily. For example, in Mposa's area Mbande and Mbeta are recognized by the local Yao subchief as important personages since they were the indigenous chiefs in the area before the Yao came in as invaders. [554] Both, for example, have adopted the Yao practice of wearing a red band round the head to indicate rank. Both have the right to conduct the Yao indigenous initiation ceremonies. [554] At one meeting I attended Mbande was allowed to sit in a chair while the only other person to do so was Mposa himself. This is a mark of honour since no commoner is allowed to sit in a chair in the presence of the chief.

In the same way the Nguru immigrants have come in small groups of matrilineal kin and have settled either in hamlets alone or set up small hamlets in close vicinity to kinsmen. Their headmen in turn have been absorbed into the general political structure though they have their own language and distinguishing cultural traits. Thus some Nguru initiate their boys according to their own *cidototo*, though others will allow their boys

[Text continues TOP of P.151B]

V. THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

642 177 The accompanying diagram is designed to summarize the main types of interaction that take place in the political structure of the three areas. Interaction between the social personalities in the political structure can be said to take place in reference to certain sets of values. One set of values is that which the Yao recognize and believe to belong to the White people. Another set of values they recognize and subscribe to as their own. A chief may interact with a village headman because he has broken a regulation which

[Text continues bottom of P.151B]

563 to be initiated according to the Yao custom (*lupanda*). In general, the Nguru headmen are village headmen in the same way as the Yao are and they follow the same pattern in political behaviour.

563 621 At the moment, throughout the areas, the various tribal groups live in kinship clusters so that under one Yao administrative headman there may be two or three unrelated Yao kin-groups and possibly one or two Nguru groups living quite separately. Though the population in the area as a whole is mixed, usually the village groups are tribally homogeneous. So far little inter-marriage has taken place. I shall not here analyse this situation, though it is politically pregnant. In many ways the Nguru immigrants [711] are more progressive than the Yao. Most Yao in this area are professed Moslems and do not attend the local schools which are Christian. However, the missions have been more successful among the Nguru and they are becoming more educated and advanced. A good proportion of the Government posts in the area is filled by Nguru for this reason. This is most significant in the context of the general situation as will become apparent in the description below. For the rest of the paper I shall consider the political structure as I see it, in terms of the social personalities in the structure, and the presence of these non-Yao groups is implicit in the rest of this analysis.

V. The Political STRUCTURE

648 642 the Administration has persuaded the chief to pass and the full significance of which lies in ● 177 a system of European values. These systems of values are foreign to each other in many features. Opposition between the two groups, White and Black, must arise if their behaviour is affected by different sets of values. The Yao, for example, believe that most deaths are caused by sorcery and claim the right to take punitive measures against the sorcerers. The Whites do not believe in this and prevent punitive action against people

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

[P.152]

DIAGRAM

SUMMARY OF POLITICAL INTERACTION IN YAO AREAS

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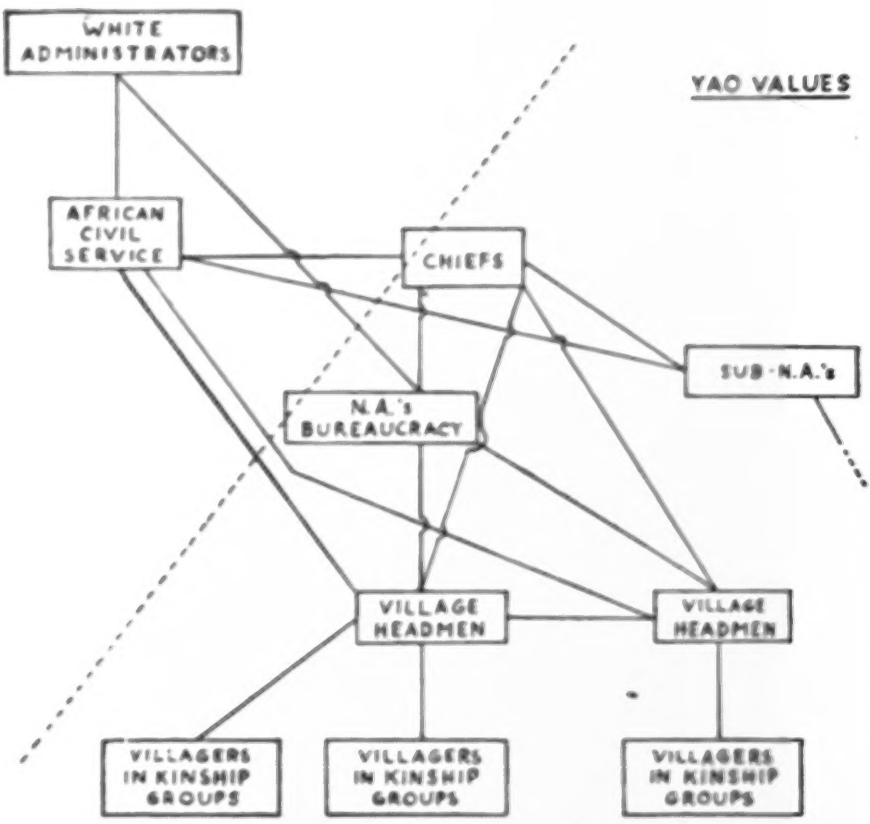

(Only the main lines of interaction are included in this diagram.)

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who are, to them, innocent. The diagram has been divided obliquely to represent these two systems or fields of values. The division of the diagram into two parts depicts a major rift in local political relationships. While some political relationships, as say between village headmen, do not directly manifest this cleavage, in most, as say the chief with his subjects, though the Whites are not present in person, they are there in the context of the interaction. This will become evident as the analysis proceeds, but at this point it is sufficient to observe that the Whites and the White system of values are an integral part of the modern Yao political organization.

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In addition to this, there is a hierarchy of status roughly conforming to the placing of the social personalities in the diagram, i.e., the White Administrator is of higher status than the African Civil Service which is roughly on the same level as the chiefs, but both are on a higher status than the Native Authority's clerk and officials are. The lines represent the main direction of interaction.

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1. *The White Administrator and the African Civil Service*

By the White Administrator I mean the District Commissioners, Agricultural Officers and other Government officials who come into contact with the African populations, particularly in the rural areas. The social distance between a White person in general and the Africans is much larger than that between, say, an African chief and his meanest subject. Social interaction on an intimate basis cannot take place between chief and Administrator mainly because their relationship is dominated by the pattern of all South African territories, where White does not interact intimately with Black. I have already stated that not many Europeans come into the area. Those Whites that do come into the area are immediately accorded the status of an Administrative Officer and are apt to be thought of as such, though they may not be so. The Yao clearly recognizes that the Labour Recruiter is a different sort of person from the Missionary and both differ from District Commissioners, but

692 side the kin-group are usually settled by the arbitration of a local village headman or the chief. What decides whether a case is tried by a village headman or a chief seems to depend largely on the seriousness of the case and hence the amount of compensation that it involves. A quarrel between a village headman and his heir for example was settled by a local village headman, the compensation in this case being a matter of 2/- and a pot of beer. More serious cases are taken to the chief for arbitration and whether the cases are then tried in the court or not depends on the type of case. Certain cases are known to conflict with the system of values of the Whites. They are tried by the same court assessors and arbitrated in by the same chief who preside in the context of the Native Courts Ordinance, but they are handled by an entirely different procedure. Thus, a case involving the accusation of sorcery or the breach of a taboo leading to death and compensation claims is arbitrated on by the chief acting in terms of the indigenous value system. These cases take place outside the court-house, usually at the chief's hut, and are not recorded as a court case at all. The chief awards compensation in the same way but it is not recorded as in ordinary court cases.

Cases which are known not to conflict with White values are tried in the court-house if compensation of some value is involved. If we exclude from consideration the cases following a breach of the N.A.'s regulations we find that the recorded court cases are almost entirely about compensation for adultery, petty theft and assaults. Here the chief and court assessor function as social personalities acting in reference to a set

[Text Continues TOP of P.158B]

VI. GENERAL
Summary

642 177 I have tried to describe the political structure of the Yao in Liwonde, Kawinga and Nyambi sub-areas in terms of the interaction of social personalities in a structure briefly summarized in the diagram. The aspect of the social personality perceivable in set situations of social interaction

[Text Continues bottom of P.158B]

692 of White values which coincide with their own.

Informants say that the position of the village
692 headman in contrast with that of the chief is
643 getting progressively weaker. They maintain
622 that cases once tried by the village headman are now taken to the chief's court. Whether this is true or not is difficult to ascertain. The fact that there is some sanction on the guilty party to settle the compensation if he is tried in the chief's court, probably pays a part. The compensation awarded is recorded in the Court Case book and the chief is empowered to keep a man under remand until it is paid. The chief sometimes supports the village headman against recalcitrant subjects. A man once refused to pay a compensation awarded against him by a village headman. The village headman referred the case to the chief who said to the man: "As you have disobeyed the order of the village headman it means that you have insulted me, the District Commissioner and the Governor". But in general there is a tendency for the central authority to be strengthened and the chief emphasizes his relationships to the White Administration in order to consolidate his position of dominance over his headmen. At a succession ceremony of a village headman the chief who had supported an unpopular candidate said: "This man has been chosen by me and the Governor agrees with me". Clearly in this insecure situation the chief saw himself against his subjects, and as part of the White Administration. He uses his power in this political situation to establish a dominance over the headmen, that he could never have established before the White men came (see p. 144).

VI. General

SUMMARY

612 depends on the field of values in which the inter-
● 177 action is taking place. To illustrate this with a simple example, when the court messenger exacted a levy of 1*d.* from each garden-owner in the area where the sacrificial cloth had been stolen from the tree-shrine, they saw in him a

B.Mitchell E-5 (1546-1947) 1949
[P.159 A]
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representative of the chief, acting as he was in terms of a system of values indigenous to the Yao. If during the same trip he informed the villagers that the village roads should be cleaned, to the people he would appear as a representative of the chief who is representative of the Administrator and is acting according to a value held by the Whites and embodied in a regulation governing the cleaning of village roads. Two sets of values intermingle in daily life and social personalities are seen first in this guise and then in that depending on the particular interactional situation. Thus the chief, when he is addressing villagers and village headmen, sees himself opposed to them and shows himself to the people as a representative of the White system of values and emphasizes his bonds with the District Commissioner and the Governor. Talking to the Agricultural Officer he sees himself opposed to the White system of values and opposes contour ridging, saying that unlike the traditional system of agriculture it encourages white ants in the gardens.

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At the same time the White value system, symbolized to the Africans mainly by the Administration, is becoming an integrating force in their life. The otherness of the White system of values emphasizes the unity of their own. Formerly hostile, chiefs are now living at peace under the

9:Lawson Y-5 (ca.1940)1949 FT7 Yao FT7
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[P. 180C]

and Yao tribes, who there predominate. These peoples seem to have come from different parts of the continent. Their languages, despite a common Bantu descent and much recent borrowing, remain as distinct as possible and are obviously not modern dialects of one more primitive tongue; their original social structures must, however, have been similar enough to attract them to each other, for they have so intermarried and their customs so fused, that one can now scarcely distinguish their ways of life and village organization. Indeed, while homesteads of apparently pure Nyanja and Yao still predominate, every considerable district contains members of both tribes, with some people, at least, of mixed descent; moreover, and although one perceive a difference of character and manners, and trace it to the influence of Mohammedanism on the Yaos, one may well be unconsciously exaggerating. This account of relationship terms, (with brief reference to underlying social structure), must be taken, therefore, to cover the fusion of two once-separate tribes, and Nyanja and Yao equivalents must—unless otherwise stated—be understood as identical in meaning. In fact, Nyanja often prefer Yao terms to their own.

How far can one isolate the Nyanja-Yao social structure in order to study it? Ngoni immigrants in this district are few, and their original patrilineal social system has largely succumbed to the customs of these earlier comers. The matrilineal system of the still more recent and numerous Lomwe immigrants is, I believe, (though my evidence is fragmentary), exerting a considerable influence on the somewhat dissimilar but also matrilineal Nyanja and Yao.

9:Lawson T-5 (ca. 1940)1949 FT7 Yao FT7
[P.181A] MARAVI FR4

For the most profound influence comes from Europe. Modern large-scale economics engulfing primitive small-scale economics, legislation by Protectorate Government, contact with Christian Missions and with European ways of life and thought—these together are shaking Nyanja and Yao society to its foundations. Constructive elements they do, of course, contain, but rebuilding on the ruins has hardly begun. In order to understand the present with its problems and promises for the future, we must know something of the past; the traditional Nyanja and Yao relationship system is the key to this past which I would try here to put into your hands. It is not yet too late to grasp. The greatest changes began within living memory, and where village and family life has been revolutionized, relationship terms are still unmouched. Hence, if we study the more conservative members of the tribes in the light of these terms, we should be able to piece together a fairly accurate outline picture of their original society. I make no attempt here to analyse in detail their relationship system: a study of the mutual responsibilities and interdependencies inherent in it, and the changes it is now undergoing, would require many years, and its results fill a large volume. This paper may, I hope, serve as an introduction to another's study, made before it is too late.

Nyanja society differs from any modern European social group in three ways: it is matrilineal; it is matrilocal; by the traditional practice of bilateral cross-cousin marriage, (i.e. marriage to the daughter of one's mother's brother, or, equally, of one's father's sister) its ties of blood and affinity have become interdependent.

Our English society, like that of the pure Ngoni, is patrilineal, the child belonging primarily to its father's family and the son inheriting wealth, social status and sometimes political power from his father. The Nyanja child, on the other hand, belongs primarily to its mother's group; a boy inherits social and political status from his mother's brother, and a girl from her maternal grandmother. These relatives on the mother's side arrange the children's marriages and have throughout life more authority and

10: Sanderson D-5 (ca. 1920)1922 FT7 Yao FT7

The men and boys now pass through the arch in order of seniority; each splashes himself with the water in the trough, but neither speaks nor rinses the mouth. The women come next, led by the head-wife of the chief; the latter rinses her mouth and, instructed by the doctor, repeats a prayer similar to that uttered by her husband. The remainder of the women merely splash themselves, like the men, before passing through the arch. All then return to the village, where the *pyajila* is continued.

Finally the doctor takes the hammer-head from the trough and hands it to the chief, who rubs the haft into it, and, a hoe having been placed on the ground, goes through the form of forging the latter by beating it with the hammer. He then sweeps the ground with the hoe as if clearing a plain overgrown with grass; he does not dig with it as in hoeing up the ground for planting seed. After this rite the chief again bathes in medicated water similar to that in the trough, and the ceremony is complete.

Whereas the *pyajila* ceremony and its adjunct, the *rite of the arch*, are now but rarely performed, no Yao will omit the *rite of purification* after a death in his family. This ceremony consists of two essential parts, both protective against the *ndoke*, a disease characterized by dropsy and supposed to be contracted by contact with a corpse, or by association, especially by sharing a meal, with those who have been in such contact. The first of these parts is bathing in certain medicines, which protects the bather from *ndoke*, and the second consists of a sort of communion meal, shared by all friends and especially relatives with those who have been contaminated, and designed to protect these friends and relatives.

The decoction for bathing is made by soaking the roots of *lupendendeti* and *kambende* in water, together with the bark of *mkanwa*, one piece each from the east and west aspects of the tree; the water assumes a reddish tint, and the whole body is bathed.

The communion meal consists of porridge made from any kind of flour or of rice, and some spends beans. In the latter some smoked and powdered rust of *mtondwapilo* is mixed, with a little salt. All near relatives of the deceased must partake of this meal, as well as their wives and their near relatives; part is carefully put aside for the use of any relative unable to be present at the ceremony.

Latterly, since the spread of Islam among the WaYao, this *rite* has become confused with the distribution of food to the poor at the funeral of a Muslim, and the Arabic word *sadaqa* (" charity ") is now generally used for it, to the exclusion of its wider, correct meaning.

It may be mentioned here that, after the death of a child the father is denied access to his wife for a period of about three weeks, and the first act must be one of active intercourse.

MEREDITH SANDERSON.

11: Sanderson D-5 (ca. 1920) 1920 FT7 Yao FT7

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE WAYAO.

By MEREDITH SANDERSON,
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Introductory.—Various writers have attempted to give English equivalents to the Yao terms describing relationship, or have alluded to the outstanding features of the system, but I am not aware that anybody has hitherto worked out the whole system.

Although it is very similar to other classificatory systems, I feel that a description of it may not be quite valueless, more especially on account of the evolutionary changes that are taking place.

The WaYao are a Bantu tribe, exogamous but not totemic, which until the middle of the last century inhabited that part of Central Africa lying to the East of Lake Nyasa, particularly in the valleys of the Lujende and Rovuma rivers. Up to that time the tribe had not extended far from the area indicated except perhaps in a northerly direction, but owing to constant internecine war in their own territory the Yaos then invaded and conquered a large part of the neighbouring territories, especially to the south, in what is now called Nyasaland.

I have said that the WaYao are not totemic, and that statement is correct at the present time. Opinions differ, however, as to how recent their loss of totemism is; though their initiation ceremonies are generally regarded as totemic, even there, in my opinion, the evidence is not conclusive, and there remains no suspicion of totemism outside those ceremonies.

It should be mentioned that Islam is much more prevalent among the Yaos than among their neighbours, but its influence is not yet so deep-rooted as greatly to obscure the pure tribal customs, except to a certain extent among the rising generation.

To facilitate description the relationships are given in tabular form, the relationship being given with reference to one man or woman.

In Table I, Column 1 describes the relationship, Column 2 gives either the nearest equivalent of the Yao term, or, if none, the actual terms. Columns 3-6 give the various relatives of the person named in Column 1, as they would be named by the man or woman under consideration.

For example, the brother of (a)'s father (Column 1) is regarded as (a)'s father (Column 3), the wife of (a)'s father's brother is (a)'s always (Column 3), their child a his "brother" or "sister" (Column 4), and so on (see Table I).